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THE COLONIZATION OF THE WEST, 1820-1830

THE rise of the new West¹ was the most significant fact in American history in the years immediately following the War of 1812. Ever since the beginnings of settlement on the Atlantic coast a frontier of settlement had advanced, cutting into the forest, pushing back the Indian, and steadily widening the area of settlement and civilization in its rear.² There had been a West even in early colonial days; but then it lay close to the coast. By the middle of the eighteenth century the West was to be found beyond tide-water, passing toward the Allegheny mountains. When this barrier was crossed and the lands on the other side of the mountains were won, in the days of the Revolution, a new and greater West, more influential on the nation's destiny, was created. The men of the "Western Waters" or the "Western World", as they loved to call themselves, developed under conditions of separation from the older settlements and from Europe. The lands, practically free, in this vast area not only attracted the settler, but furnished opportunity for all men to hew out their own careers. The wilderness ever opened a gate of escape to the poor, the discontented, and the oppressed. If social conditions tended to crystallize in the East, beyond the Alleghenies there was freedom. Grappling with new problems, under these conditions, the society that spread into this region developed inventiveness and resourcefulness; the restraints of custom were broken, and new activities, new lines of growth, new institutions were produced. Mr. Bryce has well declared³ that "the West is the most American part of America. . . . What Europe is to Asia, what England is to the rest of Europe, what America is to England, that the Western States and Territories are to the Atlantic States." The American spirit—the traits that have come to be recognized as the most characteristic—was developed in the new

¹ This paper deals with conditions explanatory of western action, not with events. For a fuller view, see the author's *Rise of the New West*, in the American Nation Series (in press).

² F. J. Turner, "Significance of the Frontier in American History," in the *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for 1893*, pp. 199-227, also in *Fifth Yearbook of National Herbart Society*; *id.*, "Problem of the West," in *Atlantic Monthly*, LXXVIII. 289.

³ *American Commonwealth* (ed. 1895), II. 830.

commonwealths that sprang into life beyond the seaboard. In these new western lands Americans achieved a boldness of conception of the country's destiny, and democracy. The ideal of the West was its emphasis upon the worth and possibilities of the common man, its belief in the right of every man to rise to the full measure of his own nature, under conditions of social mobility. Western democracy was no theorist's dream. It came, stark and strong and full of life, from the American forest.¹

The time had now come when this section was to make itself felt as a dominant force in American life. Already it had shown its influence upon the older sections. By its competition, by its attractions for settlers, it reacted on the East and gave added impulse to the democratic movement in New England and New York. The struggle of Baltimore, New York City, and Philadelphia for the rising commerce of the interior was a potent factor in the development of the Middle Region. In the South the spread of the cotton-plant and the new form which slavery took were phases of the westward movement of the plantation. The discontent of the Old South is explained by the migration of her citizens to the West and by the competition of her colonists in the lands beyond the Alleghenies. The future of the South lay in its affiliation to the Cotton Kingdom of the lower states which were rising on the plains of the Gulf of Mexico.

Rightly to understand the power which the new West was to exert upon the economic and political life of the nation in the years between 1820 and 1830, it is necessary to consider somewhat fully the statistics of growth in western population and industry.

The western states ranked with the Middle Region and the South in respect to population. Between 1812 and 1821 six new western commonwealths were added to the Union: Louisiana (1812), Indiana (1816), Mississippi (1817), Illinois (1818), Alabama (1819), and Missouri (1821). By 1830, the trans-Allegheny states had an aggregate population of over 3,600,000, representing a gain of nearly a million and half in the decade. The percentages of increase in these new communities tell a striking story. Even the older sisters of the western group, like Kentucky, with twenty-two per cent., Louisiana, with forty-one, and Tennessee and Ohio, each with sixty-one, showed a sharp contrast with the seaboard states, outside of Georgia and Maine. But for the newer communities the percentages of gain are still more significant. The figures are as follows: Indiana, 133 per cent., Illinois, 185, Alabama, 142, and

¹ F. J. Turner, "Contributions of the West to American Democracy," *Atlantic Monthly*, XCI. 83; *id.*, "The Middle West," *International Monthly*, IV. 794.

Mississippi, 81. Ohio, which, hardly more than a generation before, was "fresh, untouched, unbounded, magnificent wilderness",¹ now had a population of nearly a million, surpassing the combined population of Massachusetts and Connecticut.

A new section had arisen and was growing at such a rate that a description of it in any single year would be falsified before it could be published. Nor is the whole strength of the western element revealed by these figures for the western states. In order to estimate the weight of the western population in 1830, we must add six hundred thousand souls in the western half of New York, three hundred thousand in the interior counties of Pennsylvania, and over two hundred thousand in the trans-Allegheny counties of Virginia, more than a million, making an aggregate of 4,600,000. Fully to reckon the forces of backwoods democracy, moreover, we should include a large fraction of the interior population of Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont, North Carolina, and Georgia, and northern New York. All of these regions were to be influenced by the ideals of democratic rule which were springing up in the Mississippi valley.

In voting power the western states were even more important than the figures for population indicate. Not to speak of the representatives from the interior counties of the older states, who were also likely to be responsive to Western measures, the West itself had, under the apportionment of 1822, forty-seven out of the two hundred and thirteen members of the House of Representatives, while in the Senate its representation was eighteen out of forty-eight—more than that of any other section. Clearly, here was a region to be reckoned with. Its economic interests, its ideals, and its political leaders were certain to have a powerful, if not a controlling, voice in the councils of the nation.

At the close of the War of 1812 the West had much homogeneity. Parts of Kentucky, Tennessee, and Ohio had been settled so many years that they no longer presented typical western conditions; but, for the most part, the West then was occupied by pioneer farmers, hunting and raising stock for a living, with but a small surplus demanding a market. By the close of the period, however, industrial differentiation between the northern and southern portions of the Mississippi valley had become clearly marked. The Northwest was changing to a land of farmers and town-builders, anxious for a market for their grain and cattle; while the Southwest was becoming increasingly a cotton-raising section, swayed by the same

¹ See Webster's picture of Ohio in 1794, in his debate on Foot's Resolution, January 20, 1830, in his *Writings and Speeches*, V. 252.

impulses in respect to staple exports as those which governed the southern seaboard. Economically, the northern portion of the valley tended to connect itself with the Middle Region, while the southern portion came into increasingly intimate connection with the South. Nevertheless, it would be a radical mistake not to deal with the West as a separate region. With all these differences within itself, the West had a fundamental unity in its social structure and its democratic ideals, and at times its separate existence was revealed in no uncertain way.

The history of the occupation of the Mississippi valley is the history of the colonization of a region far surpassing in area the territory of the old thirteen states. The explanation of this movement into the interior is a simple one. It was, indeed, but the continuation of the advance of the frontier which had begun in the earliest days of American colonization. The existence of a great body of land, offered at so low a price as to be practically free, inevitably drew population toward the West. When wild lands sold for two dollars an acre, and, indeed, could be occupied by squatters almost without molestation, it was certain that settlers would seek them instead of paying twenty to fifty dollars an acre for farms that lay not much farther to the east—particularly when the western lands were more fertile. The introduction of the steamboat on the western waters in 1811, moreover, had revolutionized transportation conditions in the West.¹ At the beginning of the period of which we are treating, steamers were ascending the Mississippi and the Missouri, as well as the Ohio and its tributaries. By 1820 there were sixty steamboats on the Mississippi and Ohio; ten years later there were over two hundred and thirty. This explains some of the extension of settlement, for it was now possible to carry supplies up the river-courses and to secure a better outlet for agricultural products. Between the close of the War of 1812 and 1830, also, the Indian title was extinguished to vast regions in the West. Half of Michigan was opened to settlement; the northwestern quarter of Ohio was freed; in Indiana and Illinois (more than half of which had been Indian country prior to 1816) all but a comparatively small region of undesired prairie lands south of Lake Michigan was gained; almost the whole state of Missouri was freed from its Indian title; and, in the Gulf Region, at the close of the decade,

¹ James Flint, *Letters*, 260; Monette, in *Mississippi Historical Society Publications*, VII. 503; Hall, *Statistics of the West*, 236, 247; Lloyd, *Steamboat Disasters* (1853), 32, 40-45; Preble, *Steam Navigation*, 64; McMaster, *History of the People of the United States*, IV. 402; Chittenden, *Early Steamboat Navigation on the Missouri*, ch. ix.

the Indians held but two isolated islands of territory, in western Georgia and eastern Alabama and in northern and central Mississippi. These ceded regions were the fruit of the victories of William Henry Harrison in the Northwest, and of Andrew Jackson in the Gulf Region.¹ They were, in effect, conquered provinces, now open to colonization.

The maps of the United States census, giving the distribution of population in 1810, 1820, and 1830,² exhibit clearly the effects of the defeat of the Indians, and show the areas that were occupied in these years. In 1810 settlement beyond the mountains was almost limited to a zone along the Ohio River and its tributaries, the Cumberland and the Tennessee. North of the Ohio, in the state of that name, settlement extended along half the southern shore of Lake Erie, and was pushing toward the central portion of the state. This population also crossed to the eastern edge of Indiana, and a line of pioneers had spread up the Wabash to the French village at Vincennes. With these exceptions, the northern bank of the Ohio was hardly touched by settlement. Illinois was also unoccupied, save where the settlers had come to the American Bottoms, in the vicinity of the former French settlements across from St. Louis. Population also spread west of the Mississippi, with St. Louis as its nucleus; and at Detroit there was the ancient French town. The rest of the Northwest was practically Indian country. In the Southwest, the vicinity of Mobile showed sparse settlement, chiefly survivals of the Spanish and English occupation; and, along the fluvial lands of the eastern bank of the lower Mississippi, in the Natchez region, as well as in the old province of Louisiana, there was a considerable area occupied by planters.

By 1820 the effects of the War of 1812 and the rising tide of westward migration became manifest. Pioneer settlement spread along the river-courses of the Northwest well up to the Indian boundary. The zone of settlement along the Ohio had ascended the Missouri, in the rush to the Boone's Lick country, toward the centre of the present state. From the settlements of middle Tennessee a pioneer farming area reached southward to connect with the settlements of Mobile, and the latter became conterminous with those of the lower Mississippi. Almost all of the most recently occupied area was but thinly settled. It represented the movement of the backwoodsman, with ax and rifle, advancing to the conquest of the forest. But closer to the old settlements a more highly developed

¹ See maps in *Eighteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology*, II.

² *Statistical Atlas*, Twelfth Census, 1900, plates 4, 5, and 6.

agriculture was to be seen. Hodgson in 1821¹ describes plantations in northern Alabama in lands ceded by the Indians in 1818. Though settled less than two years, there were within a few miles five schools and four places of worship. One plantation had one hundred acres in cotton and one hundred and ten in corn, although a year and a half before then it was wilderness.

By 1830 large portions of the Indian lands, which had been ceded between 1817 and 1829, were settled by a repetition of the same type of colonization. The unoccupied lands in Indiana and Illinois were prairie country, then deemed unsuited for settlement because of the lack of wood and drinking-water. It was the hardwoods that had been taken up in the Northwest, and, for the most part, the tracts a little back from the unhealthy bottom-lands, but in close proximity to the rivers, which were the only means of transportation before the building of good roads. A new island of settlement had appeared in the northwestern portion of Illinois and the adjacent regions of Wisconsin and Iowa, due to the opening of the lead-mines. Along the Missouri valley and in the Gulf Region the areas possessed in 1820 had increased in density of population. Georgia had spread her settlers into the Indian lands, which she had so recently secured by threatening a rupture with the United States; but there still remained in the Gulf Region two great areas of Indian country, surrounded by these white settlements. This incongruous Indian element was to be swept away by the presidency of Andrew Jackson.

Translated into terms of human activity, these shaded areas, encroaching on the blank spaces of the map, meant much for the history of the United States. In the main they represent the migration of Southern people. New England, after the distress following the War of 1812 and the hard winter of 1816-1817, had sent many settlers into western New York and Ohio; the Western Reserve had increased in population by the immigration of Connecticut people; Pennsylvania and New Jersey had sent colonists to southern and central Ohio, with Cincinnati as the commercial centre. In Ohio the settlers of Middle State origin were decidedly more numerous than those from the South; and New England's share was distinctly smaller than that of the South. In the Ohio legislature in 1822 there were thirty-eight of Middle State birth, thirty-three of Southern (including Kentucky), and twenty-five of New England. But Kentucky and Tennessee (now sufficiently settled to need larger and cheaper farms for the rising generation), together with the

¹ *Letters from North America* (London, 1824), I. 269; Riley (editor), "Autobiography of Linnecum," *Mississippi Historical Society Publications*, VIII. 443.

up-country of the South, contributed the mass of the pioneer colonists to most of the Mississippi valley prior to 1830.¹ Of course a large fraction of these came from the Scotch-Irish and German stock that in the first half of the eighteenth century passed from Pennsylvania along the Great Valley to the up-country of the South. Indiana, so late as 1850, showed but ten thousand natives of New England; and twice as many persons of Southern as of Middle State origin. In the early history of Indiana, North Carolina contributed a large fraction of the population, giving to it its "Hoosier" as well as much of its Quaker stock. Illinois in this period had but a sprinkling of New-Englanders, engaged in business in the little towns. The Southern stock, including settlers from Kentucky and Tennessee, was the preponderant class. The Illinois legislature for 1833 contained fifty-eight from the South (including Kentucky and Tennessee), nineteen from the Middle States, and only four from New England. Missouri's population was chiefly Kentuckians and Tennesseans.

The leaders of this Southern element came, in considerable measure, from well-to-do classes, who migrated to improve their conditions in the freer opportunities of a new country. Land speculation, the opportunity of political preferment, and the advantages which these growing communities brought to practitioners of the law combined to attract men of this class. Many of them, as we shall see, brought their slaves with them, under the systems of indenture which made this possible. Missouri, especially, was sought by the larger planters with their slaves. But it was the poorer whites, the more democratic, non-slaveholding element of the South, which furnished the great bulk of settlers north of the Ohio. Prior to the close of the decade the same farmer type was in possession of large parts of the Gulf Region; but here, through the whole of our period, the slaveholding planters came in increasing numbers.

Two of the families which left Kentucky for the newer country in these years will illustrate the movement. The Lincoln family² had reached that state by migration from the North with the stream of backwoodsmen which bore along with it the Calhouns and the Boones. Abraham Lincoln was born in a hilly, barren portion of

¹ This conclusion is based on a study of local history, travels, and newspapers, as well as upon the statistical evidence furnished by the tables of the Census of 1850 showing nativity, and by the evidence of the nativities of members of the state legislatures in the period 1820-1830. See, for Ohio, *Niles' Register*, XXI. 368 (legislature of 1822), and *National Republican*, January 2, 1824; for Illinois in 1833, *Western Monthly Magazine*, I. 199; for Missouri convention of 1820, *Niles' Register*, XVIII. 400; for Alabama in 1820, *ibid.*, XX. 64.

² Tarbell, *Life of Lincoln*, I., chaps. I.-IV.; Herndon, *Lincoln*, I., chaps. I.-IV.; Nicolay and Hay, *Lincoln*, I., chaps. I.-III.

Kentucky in 1809. In 1816, when Lincoln was a boy of seven, his father, a poor carpenter, took his family across the Ohio on a raft, with a capital consisting of his kit of tools and several hundred gallons of whisky. In Indiana he hewed a path into the forest to a new home in the southern part of the state, where for a year the family lived in a "half-faced camp", or open shed of poles, clearing their land. In the hardships of the pioneer life Lincoln's mother died, as did many another frontier woman. By 1830 Lincoln had become a tall, strapping youth, six feet four inches in height, able to sink his ax deeper than other men into the opposing forest. At that time his father moved to the Sangamon country of Illinois with the rush of land-seekers into that new and popular region. Near the home of Lincoln in Kentucky was born, in 1808, Jefferson Davis,¹ whose father, shortly before the War of 1812, went with the stream of southward movers to Louisiana and then to Mississippi. Davis's brothers fought under Jackson in the War of 1812, and the family became typical planters of the Gulf Region.

Meanwhile, the roads that led to the Ohio valley were followed by an increasing tide of settlers from the East. "Old America seems to be breaking up, and moving westward", wrote Birkbeck in 1817, as he passed on the National Road through Pennsylvania.

We are seldom out of sight, as we travel on this grand track, towards the Ohio, of family groups, behind and before us. . . . A small waggon (so light that you might almost carry it, yet strong enough to bear a good load of bedding, utensils and provisions, and a swarm of young citizens,—and to sustain marvellous shocks in its passage over these rocky heights) with two small horses; sometimes a cow or two, comprises their all; excepting a little store of hard-earned cash for the land office of the district; where they may obtain a title for as many acres as they possess half-dollars, being one fourth of the purchase-money. The waggon has a tilt, or cover, made of a sheet, or perhaps a blanket. The family are seen before, behind, or within the vehicle, according to the road or the weather, or perhaps the spirits of the party. . . . A cart and single horse frequently affords the means of transfer, sometimes a horse and pack-saddle. Often the back of the poor pilgrim bears all his effects and his wife follows, naked-footed, bending under the hopes of the family.²

McLean of Ohio said in the House of Representatives in 1825:

In a favorable season for emigration, the traveller upon this highway will scarcely lose sight of passengers, of some description. Hundreds of families are seen migrating to the West, with ease and comfort. Drovers from the West, with their cattle, of almost every description, are seen passing eastward, seeking a market on this side of the mountains. In-

¹ Mrs. Davis, *Jefferson Davis*, I. 5.

² Morris Birkbeck, *Notes on a Journey from Virginia to Illinois* (London, 1818),

deed, this road may be compared to a great street, or thoroughfare, through some populous city—travellers on foot, on horseback, and in carriages, are seen mingling on its paved surface.¹

The Southerners who came by land along the many bad roads through Tennessee and Kentucky usually traveled with heavy, schooner-shaped wagons, drawn by four or six horses.² These family groups, crowding roads and fords, marching toward the sunset, with the canvas-covered wagon, ancestor of the prairie-schooner of the later times, were typical of the overland migration. The poorer classes traveled on foot, sometimes carrying their entire effects in a cart drawn by themselves.³ Those of more means took horses, cattle, and sheep, and sometimes sent their household goods by wagon or by steamboat up the Mississippi.⁴

The routes of travel to the western country were numerous. Prior to the opening of the Erie Canal, the New England element either passed along the Mohawk and the Genesee turnpike to Lake Erie; or crossed the Hudson and followed the line of the Catskill turnpike to the headwaters of the Allegheny; or, by way of Boston, took ship to New York, Philadelphia, or Baltimore, in order to follow a more southerly route. In Pennsylvania the principal route was the old road which, in a general way, followed the line that Forbes had cut in the French and Indian War from Philadelphia to Pittsburg by way of Lancaster and Bedford. By this time the road had been made a turnpike through a large portion of its course. From Baltimore the traveller followed a turnpike to Cumberland, on the Potomac, where began the Old National Road across the mountains to Wheeling on the Ohio, with branches leading to Pittsburg. This became one of the great arteries of western migration and commerce, connecting, as it did, at its eastern end, with the Shenandoah valley, and thus affording access to the Ohio for large areas of Virginia. Other routes lay through the passes into West Virginia, easily reached from the divide between the waters of North Carolina and of West Virginia. Saluda Gap, in northwestern South Carolina, led the way to the great valley of eastern Tennessee. In Tennessee and Kentucky many routes passed to the Ohio in the region of Cincinnati or Louisville.

¹ *Abridgment of Debates*, VIII. 253

² *History of Grundy County, Illinois*, 149; *Early History of Sangamon County, Illinois*.

³ *Niles' Register*, XXI. 320.

⁴ W. C. Howells, *Life in Ohio, 1813-1840*, 86; Jones, *Illinois and the West*, 31; *History of Grundy County, Illinois*, 149; *Early History of Sangamon County, Illinois*, 13.

When the settler arrived at the waters of the Ohio, he either took a steamboat, or placed his possessions on a flatboat, or ark, and floated down the river to his destination. From the upper waters of the Allegheny many emigrants took advantage of the lumber-rafts, which were constructed from the pine forests of southwestern New York, to float, with themselves and their belongings, to the Ohio. With the advent of the steamboat these older modes of navigation were, to a considerable extent, superseded. But navigation on the Great Lakes had not sufficiently advanced by the end of the decade to afford opportunity for any considerable movement of settlement, by this route, beyond Lake Erie.

In the course of the decade the cost of reaching the West varied greatly with the decrease in the transportation rates brought about by the competition of the Erie Canal, the improvement of the turnpikes, and the development of steamboat navigation. The expense of the long overland journey from New England, prior to the opening of the Erie Canal, made it extremely difficult for those without any capital to reach the West. The stage rates on the Pennsylvania turnpike and the Old National Road, prior to the opening of the Erie Canal, were about five or six dollars a hundredweight from Philadelphia or Baltimore to the Ohio River; the individual was regarded as so much freight.¹ To most of the movers, who drove their own teams and camped by the wayside, however, the actual expense was simply that of providing food for themselves and their horses on the road. The cost of moving by land is illustrated by the case of a Maryland family, consisting of fifteen persons, of whom five were slaves. In 1835 they traveled about twenty miles a day, with a four-horse wagon, three hundred miles, to Wheeling, at an expense of seventy-five dollars.² The expense of traveling by stage and steamboat from Philadelphia to St. Louis at the close of the decade was about fifty-five dollars for one person. By steamboat from New Orleans to St. Louis cost thirty dollars, including food and lodging; for deck-passage, without food or lodging, the charge was only eight dollars.³ In 1823 the cost of passage from Cincinnati to New Orleans by steamboat, taking about eight days, was twenty-five dollars; from New Orleans to Cincinnati (sixteen days) fifty dollars.⁴ In the early thirties one could go from New Orleans to Pittsburg, as cabin passenger, for from thirty-five to forty-five dollars.⁵

¹ Evans, *Pedestrian Tour*, 145.

² *Niles' Register*, XLVIII. 242.

³ *Illinois Monthly Magazine*, II. 53.

⁴ *Niles' Register*, XXV. 95.

⁵ *Emigrants' and Travellers' Guide through the Valley of the Mississippi*, 341.

Arrived at the nearest point to his destination on the Ohio, the emigrant either cut out a road to his new home, or pushed up some tributary of that river in a keel-boat. If he was one of the poorer classes, he became a squatter on the public lands, trusting to find in the profits of his farming the means of paying for his land. Not uncommonly, after clearing the land, he sold his improvements to the actual purchaser, under the customary usage, or by pre-emption laws.¹ With the money thus secured he would purchase new land in a remoter area, and thus establish himself as an independent landowner. Under the credit system² which existed at the opening of the period, the settler purchased his land at two dollars per acre, by a cash payment of fifty cents and the rest in instalments running over a period of four years; but by the new law of 1820 the settler was permitted to buy a tract of eighty acres from the government at a minimum price of a dollar and a quarter per acre, without credit. The price of labor in the towns along the Ohio, coupled with the low cost of provisions, made it possible for even a poor day-laborer from the East to accumulate the necessary amount to make his land-purchase.³

Having in this way settled down either as a squatter or as a landowner, the pioneer proceeded to hew out a clearing in the midst of the forest.⁴ Commonly he had selected his lands with reference to the value of the soil, as indicated by the character of the hardwoods, but this meant that the labor of clearing was the more severe. Under the sturdy strokes of his ax the light of day was let into the little circle of cleared ground.⁵ With the aid of his neighbors, called together under the social attractions of a "raising", with its inevitable accompaniment of whisky and a "frolic", he erected his log-cabin. If he was too remote from neighbors or too poor to afford a cabin, as in the case of Lincoln's father, a rude half-faced camp served the purpose for the first months of his occupation. "America", wrote Birkbeck, "was bred in a cabin."

Having secured a foothold, the settler next proceeded to "girdle" or "deaden" an additional forest area, preparatory to his farming operations. This consisted in cutting a ring through the bark around the lower portion of the trunk, to prevent the sap

¹ Hall, *Statistics of the West*, 180; Kingdom, *America*, 56; J. M. Peck, *New Guide for Emigrants to the West* (1837), 119-132.

² Emerick, *The Credit System and the Public Domain* (Vanderbilt Southern History Society, Publication no. 3).

³ See, for example, Peck, *New Guide for Emigrants to the West*, 107-134; Bradbury, *Travels* (London, 1817), 296.

⁴ Kingdom, *America*, 10, 54, 63; J. Flint, *Letters*, 206; McMaster, *History of the People of the United States*, V. 152-155; W. C. Howells, *Life in Ohio*, 115.

⁵ Hall, *Statistics of the West*, 98, 101, 145. *Notes on Journey*, 94.

from rising. In a short time the withered branches were ready for burning, and in the midst of the blackened stumps the first crop of corn and vegetables was planted.¹

In regions nearer to the East, as in western New York, it was sometimes possible to repay a large portion of the cost of clearing by the sale of pot and pearl ashes extracted from the logs, which were brought together for burning into huge piles.² This was accomplished by a "log-rolling", under the united efforts of the neighbors, as in the case of the raising. More commonly in the West the logs were wasted by burning, except such as were split into rails, which, laid one above another, made the zigzag "worm-fences" for the protection of the fields of the pioneer.

When a clearing was sold to a later comer, fifty or sixty dollars in addition to the government price of land was commonly charged for forty acres, inclosed and partly cleared.³ It was estimated that the cost of a farm of three hundred and twenty acres at the edge of the prairie in Illinois, at this time, would be divided as follows: for one hundred acres of prairie, two hundred dollars; for fencing a forty-acre field with rail-fence, one hundred and sixty dollars; for breaking it up with a plow, two dollars per acre, or three hundred and twenty dollars; eighty acres of timber land and eighty acres of pasture prairie, two hundred dollars. Thus it cost a little over a thousand dollars to secure an improved farm of three hundred and twenty acres. But the mass of the early settlers were too poor to afford such an outlay, and were either squatters within a little clearing, or owners of eighty acres, which they hoped to increase by subsequent purchase. Since they worked with the labor of their own hands and that of their sons, the cash outlay was practically limited to the original cost of the lands and articles of husbandry. A competent authority⁴ estimated the cost of an Indiana farm of eighty acres of land, with two horses, two or three cows, a few hogs and sheep, and farming utensils, at about four hundred dollars.

The peculiar skill required of the axman who entered the hardwood forests, together with readiness to undergo the privations of the life, made the backwoodsman in a sense an expert engaged in a special calling.⁵ Frequently he was the descendant of generations

¹ Often the settler did not even burn the girdled trees, but planted his crop under the dead foliage. J. Flint, *Letters from America* (Edinburgh, 1822), 207.

² *Life of Thurlow Weed* (Autobiography), I. 11.

³ Kingdom, *America*, 10, 54.

⁴ Tanner (publisher), *Guide*.

⁵ J. Hall, *Statistics of the West*, 101; cf. Chastellux, *Travels in North America* (London, 1787), I. 44.

of pioneers, who, on successive frontiers, from the neighborhood of the Atlantic coast toward the interior, had cut and burned the forest, fought the Indians, and pushed forward the line of civilization. He bore the marks of the struggle in his face, made sallow by living in the shade of the forest, "shut from the common air",¹ and in a constitution often racked by malarial fever. Dirt and squalor were too frequently found in the squatter's cabin,² and education and the refinements of life were denied to him. Often shiftless and indolent, in the intervals between his tasks of forest-felling he was fonder of hunting than of a settled agricultural life. With his rifle he eked out his sustenance, and the peltries furnished him a little ready cash.³ His few cattle grazed in the surrounding forest and his hogs fed on its mast.

The backwoodsman of this type represented the outer edge of the advance of civilization. Where settlement was closer, co-operative activity possible, and little villages, with the mill and retail stores, existed, conditions of life were ameliorated, and a better type of pioneer was found. Into such regions circuit-riders and wandering preachers had carried the beginnings of church organization, and schools were started. But the frontiersmen proper constituted a moving class, ever ready to sell out their clearings in order to press on to a new frontier, where game more abounded, soil was reported to be better, and where the forest furnished a welcome retreat from the uncongenial encroachments of civilization. If, however, he was thrifty and forehanded, the backwoodsman remained on his clearing, improving his farm and sharing in the change from wilderness life.

Behind the type of the backwoodsman came the type of the pioneer farmer. Equipped with a little capital, he often, as we have seen, purchased the clearing, and thus avoided some of the initial hardships of pioneer life. In the course of a few years, as sawmills were erected, frame-houses took the place of the log-cabins; the rough clearing, with its stumps, gave way to well-tilled fields; orchards were planted; livestock roamed over the enlarged clearing; and an agricultural surplus was ready for export. Soon the adventurous speculator offered corner lots in a new town-site, and the rude beginnings of a city were seen.⁴

Thus western occupation advanced in a series of waves:⁵ the In-

¹ Birkbeck, *Notes on Journey* (London, 1818), 105-114.

² R. Babcock, *Forty Years of Pioneer Life* ("Journals and Correspondence of J. M. Peck"), 101.

³ Birkbeck, *Notes on Journey*, 51.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 90, 91.

⁵ See the excellent descriptions of the frontiersmen and their successors in J. M. Peck, *New Guide to the West* (Cincinnati, 1848), chap. iv., and T. Flint,

dian was sought by the fur-trader; the fur-trader was followed by the frontiersman, whose cattle exploited the natural grasses and the acorns of the forest; next came the wave of primitive agriculture, followed by more intensive farming and city life. All the stages of social development went on under the eye of the traveller as he passed from the frontier toward the East. Such was the process which was steadily pushing its way into the American wilderness, as it had for generations.

While thus the frontier folk spread north of the Ohio and up the Missouri, a different movement was in progress in the Gulf Region. In the beginning precisely the same type of occupation was to be seen. The poorer classes of Southern emigrants cut out their clearings along rivers that flowed to the Gulf and to the lower Mississippi, and, with the opening of this decade, went in increasing numbers into Texas, where enterprising Americans had secured concessions from the Mexican government.¹ But while this movement of log-cabin pioneers was entering the Gulf Plains, caravans of slaveholding planters were advancing from the seaboard to the occupation of the cotton-lands of the same region. As the free farmers of the interior had been replaced in the upland country of the South by the slaveholding planters, so now the frontiersmen of the Southwest were pushed back from the more fertile lands into the pine hills and barrens. Not only was the pioneer unable to refuse the higher price which was offered him for his clearing, but, in the competitive bidding of the public land sales,² the wealthier planter secured the desirable soils. Social forces worked to the same end. When the pioneer invited his slaveholding neighbor to a "raising", it grated on his sense of the fitness of things to have the guest appear with gloves, directing the gang of slaves which he contributed to the functions.³ Little by little, therefore, the old pioneer life tended to retreat to the less desirable lands, leaving the slaveholder in possession of the rich "buck-shot" soils that spread over central Alabama and Mississippi and the fat alluvium that lined

Geography and History of the Western States, 350; J. Flint, *Letters from America*, 206; cf. Turner, "Significance of the Frontier in American History," in *Report of the American Historical Association for 1893*, 214; McMaster, *History of the People of the United States*, V. 152-160; Kingdom, *America*, 56-57.

¹ Garrison, *Texas*, chaps. XIII., XIV.; Wooten (editor), *Comprehensive History of Texas*, I., chaps. VIII. and IX.; Kuykendall, "Reminiscences of Early Texans," in *Quarterly of Texas State Historical Association*, VII., no. 1, 29; Bugbee, "Texas Frontier," in *Publications of the Southern History Association*, March, 1900, p. 106.

² *Northern Alabama* (published by Smith and De Land), 249; W. G. Brown, *History of Alabama*, 129-131; *id.*, *Lower South*, 24-26.

³ Susan D. Smedes, *A Southern Planter*, 67.

the eastern bank of the Mississippi.¹ Even at the present time, the counties of dense negro population reveal the results of this movement of segregation.

By the side of the picture of the advance of the pioneer farmer, bearing his household goods in his canvas-covered wagon to his new home across the Ohio, must therefore be placed the picture of the Southern planter, crossing through the forests of western Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi, or passing over the free state of Illinois to the Missouri valley, in his family carriage, with servants, packs of hunting-dogs, and a train of slaves, their nightly camp-fires lighting up the wilderness where so recently the Indian hunter had held possession.²

But this new society had a characteristic Western flavor. The old patriarchal type of slavery along the seaboard was modified by the western conditions in the midst of which the slaveholding interest was now lodged. Planters, as well as pioneer farmers, were exploiting the wilderness, and building a new society under characteristic Western influences. Rude strength, a certain coarseness of life, and aggressiveness characterized this society, as it did the whole of the Mississippi valley.³ Slavery furnished a new ingredient for Western forces to act upon. The system took on a more commercial tinge: the plantation had to be cleared and made profitable as a purely business enterprise; the slaves were purchased in considerable numbers from the older states instead of being inherited in the family. Slave-dealers passed to the Southwest, with their coffles of negroes brought from the outworn lands of the old South. It was estimated in 1832 that Virginia annually exported six thousand slaves for sale to other states.⁴ An English traveller, Blane, reported in 1823 that every year from ten to fifteen thousand slaves were sold from the states of Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia, and sent to the South.⁵ At the same time, illicit importation of slaves through New Orleans reached an amount estimated at from ten to fifteen thousand a year.⁶ It was not until the next

¹ The Natchez region was long settled and prosperous. See description in Hodgson, *Letters from North America* (London, 1824), I. 184; Cuming, *Tour to the West* (Pittsburg, 1810), 293.

² Hodgson, *Letters from North America*, I. 138; Niles' Register, XLIV. 222; Susan D. Smedes, *A Southern Planter*, 52-54; Flint, *Geography and History of the Western States*, II. 350, 379 (slaveholding migration into Missouri).

³ Baldwin, *Flush Times in Alabama*; cf. Gilmer, *Sketches of Georgia, etc.*; Longstreet, *Georgia Scenes*; Phillips, *Georgia and State Rights*, chap. iv.

⁴ Collins, *Domestic Slave Trade*, 50.

⁵ *Excursion through United States*, 226; Hodgson, *Letters from North America*, I. 194, says 4,000 to 5,000 per annum from Maryland and Virginia to New Orleans.

⁶ Collins, *Domestic Slave Trade*, 44.

decade that this incoming tide of slaves reached its height, but by 1830 it was clearly marked and was already transforming the Southwest. Mississippi doubled the number of her slaves in the decade, and Alabama nearly trebled hers. In the same period the number of slaves in Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina remained practically stationary.

The comparative statistics of development of cotton culture in the South and Southwest illustrate the increase of the slaveholding plantations, and the gradual transformation of the lower South into the Cotton Kingdom. The following table shows the progress of this crop :

COTTON CROP (in million pounds).¹

	1791	1801	1811	1821	1826	1834
South Carolina	1.5	20.0	40.0	50.0	70.0	65.0
Georgia5	10.0	20.0	50.0	75.0	75.0
Virginia		5.0	8.0	12.0	25.0	10.0
North Carolina.....		4.0	7.0	10.0	10.0	9.5
Total	2.0	39.0	75.0	122.0	180.0	159.5
Tennessee		1.0	3.0	20.0	45.0	45.0
Louisiana			2.0	10.0	55.0	62.0
Mississippi.....				10.0	70.0	85.0
Alabama				20.0	45.0	85.0
Florida.....					2.0	20.0
Arkansas5	.5
Total.....		1.0	5.0	60.0	217.5	297.5
Grand total	2.0	40.0	80.0	182.0	397.5	457.0

After 1830 the differences between the northern and southern portions of the Mississippi valley were accentuated. From New York and New England came a tide of settlement, in the thirties, which followed the Erie Canal and the Great Lakes, and began to occupy the prairie lands, which had been avoided by the Southern axmen. This region became an extension of the Greater New England already to be seen in New York. The Southern pioneers in the Northwest formed a transitional zone between this northern area and the slave states south of the Ohio. In the Gulf Plains a Greater South was in process of formation, but by no means completely established. As yet it was a mixture of pioneer and planter, slave and free, profoundly affected by its Western traits.² The different states of the South were steadily sending in their colonists. In Alabama, for example, the Georgians settled, as a rule, in the

¹ De Bow, *Review*, XVII. 428; cf. MacGregor, *Commercial Statistics*, 462; von Halle, *Baumwollproduktion*, 169. There are discrepancies; the figures are to be taken as illustrative rather than exact.

² Curry, "A Settlement in East Alabama," in *American Historical Magazine*, II. 203.

east; the Tennesseans, moving from the great bend of the Tennessee River, were attracted to the northern and middle section; and the Virginians and Carolinians went to the west and southwest, following the bottom-lands near the rivers.¹

By 1820 the West had developed the beginnings of many of the cities which have since ruled over the region. Buffalo and Detroit were hardly more than villages until the close of this period, when Buffalo counted over 8,000 souls. They waited for the development of steam navigation on the Great Lakes and the opening of the prairies. Cleveland was but a hamlet during most of the decade. By 1830 the construction of the canal connecting the Cuyahoga with the Scioto increased her prosperity, and her harbor began to profit by its natural advantages. As the metropolis of the Western Reserve, it had an important future; but at the beginning of the decade of which we write its population was only one hundred and fifty, and at its close only one thousand.² Chicago and Milwaukee were mere fur-trading stations in Indian country until the close of the decade. Pittsburg, at the head of the Ohio, was losing its old pre-eminence as the gateway to the West, but was finding recompense in the development of its manufactures. By 1830 its population was about twelve thousand.³ Foundries, rolling-mills, nail-factories, steam-engine works, and distilleries were busily at work; and the city, dingy with the smoke of soft coal, was already dubbed the "young Manchester" or the "Birmingham" of America.

By 1830 Wheeling had intercepted much of the overland trade and travel to the Ohio, profiting by the Old National Road and the wagon trade from Baltimore. As the head of navigation during low water and by its location below Pittsburg, it gave readier access to the Ohio valley. By 1830 it was about the same size as Buffalo. Over one hundred and thirty steam-mills, within twenty-five miles of the city, produced nearly a million dollars' worth of flour annually.⁴ It was also the site of a few cotton-mills and woolen-mills and some iron-works. Cincinnati was rapidly rising to the position of the Queen City of the West. Situated where the river reached with a great bend toward the interior of the Northwest, in the rich farming country between the two Miamis, and opposite the Licking River, it was the commercial centre of a vast and fertile region

¹ W. G. Brown, *History of Alabama, 129-130*; *Northern Alabama* (published by Smith and De Land), part iv. 243 *et seqq.*

² Whittlesey, *Early History of Cleveland*, 456; Kennedy, *History of Cleveland*, chap. viii.

³ Thurston, *Pittsburgh and Allegheny in the Centennial Year*, 61.

⁴ Martin, *Gazetteer of Virginia*, 407.

of Ohio and Kentucky.¹ Its population was recruited chiefly from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York, and it had a reputation for cleanliness and thrift, and for its newspapers and periodicals, its educational facilities, and its churches.² By 1830, with 24,800 souls and some three thousand dwellings, mostly brick,³ it was the most populous city of the West, with the exception of New Orleans. The centre of steamboat-building, it also received extensive imports of goods from the East and exported the surplus crops of Ohio and adjacent parts of Kentucky. Its principal industry, however, was pork-packing, from which it won the name of "Porkopolis".⁴ By the close of the decade its annual exports averaged over \$1,500,000 and its imports over \$4,000,000. When the canals between Lake Erie and the Ohio were opened, about 1830, it profited by the trade of the central portion of the state. Louisville, at the Falls of the Ohio, was an important place of transshipment, and the export centre for large quantities of tobacco. There were considerable manufactures of rope and bagging, products of the Kentucky hemp-fields, and new cotton and woolen factories were struggling for existence.⁵ By 1830 it had a population of about ten thousand. St. Louis occupied a unique position, as the entrepôt of the important fur-trade of the upper Mississippi and the vast water system of the Missouri, as well as the outfitting-point for the Missouri settlements. The French element was still important, but was gradually giving way to adventurous Americans. St. Louis's interests included the far-off region of the Columbia and the ancient Spanish settlements about Santa Fé. It was the capital of the Far West, and the commercial centre for Illinois. Its population at the close of the decade was about six thousand.

Only a few villages lay along the Mississippi between St. Louis and New Orleans. Memphis and Vicksburg were small centres for the neighboring planters, but without particular significance at this time; Natchez was an old settlement, reminding visitors of a West-Indian town. New Orleans was the emporium of the whole Mississippi valley. As yet the direct effect of the Erie Canal was chiefly limited to the state of New York. There was only the beginning of steam navigation on the Great Lakes, and the Ohio

¹ Melish, *Information to Emigrants*, 108.

² *Cincinnati Directory* (1829), 141; Drake and Mansfield, *Cincinnati in 1826*, chaps. III.-XVII.

³ Cumings, *Western Pilot*, 40; Ogden, *Letters from the West*, 19; Mrs. Trollope, *Domestic Manners of the Americans*, chaps. V.-XVI.

⁴ Drake and Mansfield, *Cincinnati in 1826*, 70; *Winter in the West*, I. 115.

⁵ Durrett, *Centenary of Louisville* (Filson Club Pubs., No. 8), 50-101; *Louisville Directory*, 1832, 131.

was not connected with them by canals until the close of the period. The great bulk of western exports passed down the tributaries of the Mississippi to New Orleans. It was, therefore, the centre of foreign exports for the valley, as well as the port from which the coastwise trade in the products of the whole interior departed. In 1830 its population was nearly fifty thousand.¹

The rise of an agricultural surplus was transforming the West and preparing a new influence in the nation. It was this surplus and the demand for markets that developed the cities just mentioned. As they grew, the price of land in their neighborhood increased; roads radiated into the surrounding country; and farmers, whose crops had been almost worthless from the lack of transportation facilities, now found it possible to market their surplus at a small profit. While the West was thus learning the advantages of a home market, the extension of cotton and sugar cultivation in the South and Southwest gave them a new and valuable market. More and more, the planters came to rely upon the Northwest for their food supplies and for the mules and horses for their fields. Cotton became the engrossing interest of the plantation belt, and, while the full effects of this differentiation of industry did not appear in our decade, the beginnings were already visible.² In 1835 Pitkin³ reckoned the value of the domestic and foreign exports of the interior as far in excess of the whole exports of the United States in 1790. Within forty years the development of the interior had brought about the economic independence of the United States, and transferred to interstate trade the larger part of the trade which had formerly sought the Old World.

During most of the decade the merchandise to supply the interior was brought laboriously across the mountains by the Pennsylvania turnpikes and the Old National Road, or, in the case of especially heavy freight, was carried along the Atlantic coast into the Gulf and up the Mississippi and Ohio by steamboats. The cost of transportation in the wagon trade from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh and Baltimore to Wheeling placed a heavy tax upon the consumer. In 1817 the freight charge from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh was estimated at as high as seven to ten dollars a hundredweight;⁴ a few years later it dropped to four to six dollars;⁵ and in 1823 it had

¹ Fortier, *History of Louisiana*, III., ch. VII.; Waring and Cable, *New Orleans* (Tenth Census, Social Statistics of Cities), 43-47.

² Callender, "Early Transportation and Banking Enterprises of the States," in *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, November, 1902 (XVII. 3-54).

³ *Statistical View*, 534.

⁴ Birkbeck, *Notes on Journey*, 128.

⁵ Ogden, *Letters from the West*, 8; Cobbett, *Year's Residence*, 337; Evans, *Pedestrian Tour*, 145.

fallen to three dollars.¹ It took a month to wagon merchandise from Baltimore to central Ohio.² Transportation companies, running four-horse freight wagons, conducted a regular business on these turnpikes between the eastern and western states. In 1820 over three thousand wagons ran between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, transporting merchandise valued at about eighteen million dollars annually.³

The construction of the National Road had reduced freight rates to nearly one-half what they were at the close of the War of 1812, and the introduction of steam navigation from New Orleans up the Mississippi had cut water-rates by that route to one-third of the former charge. Nevertheless there was a crying need for internal improvements, and particularly for canals, to provide an outlet for the increasing products of the West. "Even in the country where I reside, not eighty miles from tidewater", said Tucker,⁴ of Virginia, "it takes the farmer one bushel of wheat to pay the expense of carrying two to a seaport town."

The bulk of the crop, as compared with its value, practically prevented transportation by land farther than a hundred miles.⁵ It is this that helps to explain the attention which the interior first gave to making whisky and raising livestock; the former carried the crop in a small bulk with high value, while the livestock could walk to a market. Until after the War of 1812, the cattle of the Ohio valley were driven to the seaboard, chiefly to Philadelphia or Baltimore.⁶ Travellers were astonished to see on the highway droves of four or five thousand hogs, going to an eastern market. It was estimated that over a hundred thousand hogs were driven east annually from Kentucky alone.⁷ Kentucky hog-drivers also passed into Tennessee, Virginia, and the Carolinas with their droves.⁸ The swine lived on the nuts and acorns of the forests; thus they were peculiarly suited to pioneer conditions. At first the cattle were taken to the plantations of the Potomac to fatten for Baltimore and Philadelphia, much in the same way that, in recent times, the cattle of the Great Plains are brought to the feeding-grounds in the corn belt of Kansas, Nebraska, and Iowa.⁹ Toward the close

¹ *Philadelphia in 1824* (Philadelphia, 1824), 45. ² Searight, *Old Pike*, 112.

³ Mills, *Treatise on Inland Navigation* (Baltimore, 1820), 89, 90, 93, 95-97; *Annals of Congress*, 18 Cong., 1 sess., I. 991; Searight, *Old Pike*, 107.

⁴ Speech in House of Representatives, March 6, 1818, *Annals of Congress*, 15 Cong., 1 sess., I. 1126.

⁵ McMaster, *History of the People of the United States*, III. 464.

⁶ *Life of Ephraim Cutler*, 89; Birkbeck, *Notes on Journey*, 24.

⁷ *Excursion through United States* (London, 1824), 90.

⁸ *Atlantic Monthly*, XXVI. 170.

⁹ Michaux, *Travels*, 191; J. Palmer, *Journal of Travels*, 36.

of the decade, however, the feeding-grounds shifted into Ohio, and the pork-packing industry, as we have seen, found its centre at Cincinnati,¹ the most important source of supply for the hams and bacon and salt pork which passed down the Mississippi to furnish a large share of the plantation food. From Kentucky and the rest of the Ohio valley droves of mules and horses passed through the Tennessee valley to the South to supply the plantations.

Statistics at Cumberland Gap for 1828 gave the value of livestock passing the turnpike gate there at \$1,167,000.² Senator Hayne, of South Carolina, declared that in 1824 the South was supplied from the West, through Saluda Gap, with livestock, horses, cattle, and hogs, to the amount of over a million dollars a year.³

But the outlet from the West over the roads to the East and South was but a subordinate element in her internal commerce. It was the Father of Waters, with its ramifying tributaries, which gathered the products of the great valley and brought them to New Orleans. Down the Mississippi floated a multitude of craft: lumber-rafts from the Allegheny, the old-time arks, with cattle, flour, and bacon, hay-boats, keel-boats, and skiffs, all mingled with the steam-boats which plied the western waters.⁴ Flatboatmen, raftsmen, and deck-hands constituted a turbulent and reckless population, living on the country through which they passed, fighting and drinking in true "half-horse, half-alligator" style. Prior to the steamboat, all of the commerce from New Orleans to the upper country was carried on in about twenty barges, averaging a hundred tons each, and making one trip a year. Although the steamboat did not drive out the other craft, it revolutionized the commerce of the river.⁵ Whereas it had taken the keel-boats thirty to forty days to descend from Louisville to New Orleans, and about ninety days to ascend the fifteen hundred miles of navigation by poling and warping upstream, the steamboat had shortened the time, by 1822, to seven days down and sixteen days up.⁶ As the steamboats ascended the

¹ J. Hall, *Statistics of the West* (Cincinnati, 1836), 145-147.

² *Emigrant's and Traveller's Guide to the West* (Philadelphia, 1834), 194.

³ Speech in Senate in 1832, *Register of Debates in Congress*, VIII., part 1. 80; cf. *Annals of Congress*, 18 Cong., 1 sess., I. 1411.

⁴ For descriptions of the navigation of the Mississippi see T. Flint, *Recollections of the Last Ten Years* (Boston, 1826), 101-110; E. S. Thomas, *Reminiscences of the Last Sixty-five Years* (Hartford, 1840), I. 290-293; *Report on Internal Commerce*, 1888; Hall, *Statistics of the West* (Cincinnati, 1836), 236; *History of Alexander, Union, and Pulaski Counties, Illinois*, 269; W. C. Howells, *Life in Ohio*, 85; Schultz, *Travels*, 129.

⁵ Hall, *The West: its Commerce and Navigation*, 168.

⁶ *Annals of Congress*, 17 Cong., 2 sess., 407; McMaster, *History of the People of the United States*, V. 166; *National Gazette*, September 26, 1823 (list

various tributaries of the Mississippi to gather the products of the growing West, the pioneers came more and more to realize the importance of the invention. They resented the idea of the monopoly which Fulton and Livingston wished to enforce prior to the decision of Chief Justice Marshall, in the case of *Gibbons v. Ogden*—a decision of vital interest to the whole interior.¹

They saw in the steamboat a symbol of their own development. "An Atlantic cit", boasted a writer in the *Western Monthly Review*,²

who talks of us under the name of backwoodsmen, would not believe, that such fairy structures of oriental gorgeousness and splendor, as the Washington, the Florida, the Walk in the Water, the Lady of the Lake, etc. etc., had ever existed in the imaginative brain of a romancer, much less, that they were actually in existence, rushing down the Mississippi, as on the wings of the wind, or plowing up between the forests, and walking against the mighty current 'as things of life,' bearing speculators, merchants, dandies, fine ladies, every thing real, and every thing affected, in the form of humanity, with pianos, and stocks of novels, and cards, and dice, and flirting, and love-making, and drinking, and champagne, and on the deck, perhaps, three hundred fellows, who have seen alligators, and neither fear whiskey, nor gun-powder. A steam boat, coming from New Orleans, brings to the remotest villages of our streams, and the very doors of the cabins, a little Paris, a section of Broadway, or a slice of Philadelphia, to ferment in the minds of our young people, the innate propensity for fashions and finery. Within a day's journey of us, three distinct canals are in respectable progress towards completion. . . . Cincinnati will soon be the centre of the 'celestial empire,' as the Chinese say; and instead of encountering the storms, the sea sickness, and dangers of a passage from the gulf of Mexico to the Atlantic, whenever the Erie canal shall be completed, the opulent southern planters will take their families, their dogs and parrots, through a world of forests, from New Orleans to New York, giving us a call by the way. When they are more acquainted with us, their voyage will often terminate here.

By 1830 the produce which reached New Orleans from the Mississippi valley was estimated to amount to twenty-six million dollars.³ In 1822 three million dollars' worth of goods was estimated to have passed the Falls of the Ohio on the way to market,

of steamboats, rates of passage, estimate of products); *Excursion through the United States*, 119.

¹ Thomas, *Travels through the Western Country*, 62; *Alexandria Herald*, June 23, 1817.

² Timothy Flint's *Western Monthly Review*, May, 1827 (I. 25-26).

³ *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, XVII. 20; cf. Pitkin, *Statistical View* (1835), 534-536, giving the figures of the annual surplus for the various areas of the West, 1832-1834. He gives to Tennessee over six million dollars; to Kentucky five and a quarter millions; to Ohio ten millions; and to the Wabash valley, Indiana, one million.

representing much of the surplus of the Ohio valley. Of this, pork amounted to \$1,000,000 in value; flour, to \$900,000; tobacco, to \$600,000; and whisky, to \$500,000.¹ The inventory of products reveals the Mississippi valley as a vast colonial society, producing the raw materials of a simple and primitive agriculture. The beginnings of manufacture in her cities, however, promised to bring about a movement for industrial independence in the West. In spite of evidences of growing wealth, there was such a decline in agricultural prices that, for the farmer who did not live on the highways of commerce, it was almost unprofitable to raise wheat for the market.²

These are the economic conditions that assist in understanding the political attitude of Western leaders in our period. The cry of the East for protection to infant industries was swelled by the little cities of the West, and the demand for a home market found its strongest support beyond the Alleghenies. Internal improvements and lower rates of transportation were essential to the prosperity of the Westerners. Largely a debtor class, in need of capital, credit, and an expansion of the currency, they resented attempts to restrain the reckless banking which their optimism fostered.

But the political ideals and actions of the West are explained by social, quite as much as by economic, forces. It was certain that this society, where equality and individualism flourished, where assertive democracy was supreme, where impatience with the old order of things was a ruling passion, would demand control of the government, would resent the rule of the trained statesmen and official classes, and would fight nominations by Congressional caucus and the continuance of presidential dynasties. Besides its susceptibility to change, the West had generated, from its Indian fighting, forest-felling, and expansion, a belligerency and a largeness of outlook with regard to the nation's territorial destiny. As the pioneer, widening the ring-wall of his clearing in the midst of the stumps and marshes of the wilderness, had a vision of the lofty buildings and crowded streets of a future city, so the West as a whole de-

¹ *National Republican*, March 7, 1823; cf. *National Gazette*, September 26, 1823; *Excursion through the United States*, 119.

² W. C. Howells, *Life in Ohio*, 138. "Fifty cents a bushel was a great price for it [wheat] at the river; and, as two horses and a man were required for four days to make the journey [thirty-five miles, to the Ohio], in good weather, with thirty-five or forty bushels of wheat, and a great deal longer if the roads were bad, it was not to be expected that we could realize more than twenty-five cents in cash for it. But there was no sale for it in cash. The nominal price for it in trade was usually thirty cents." On the price of wheat, see M'Culloch, *Commercial Dictionary* (Philadelphia, 1852), I. 683, 684; Hazard, *United States Commercial and Statistical Register*, I. 251; O'Reilly, *Sketches of Rochester*, 362.

veloped ideals of the future of the common man, and of the grandeur and expansion of the nation.

The West was too new a section to have developed educational facilities to any large extent. The pioneers' poverty, as well as the traditions of the southern interior from which they so largely came, discouraged extensive expenditures for public schools.¹ In Kentucky and Tennessee the more prosperous planters had private tutors, often New England collegians, for their children.² So-called colleges were numerous, some of them fairly good. In 1830 a writer in the *American Quarterly Register*³ made a survey of higher education in the whole western country and reported twenty-eight institutions, with seven hundred and sixty-six graduates and fourteen hundred and thirty undergraduates. Less than forty thousand volumes were recorded in the college and "social" libraries of the entire Mississippi valley. Very few students went from the West to eastern colleges. But the foundations of public education had been laid in the land-grants for common schools and universities. For the present this fund was generally misappropriated and wasted, or worse. But the ideal of a democratic education was held up in the first constitution of Indiana, making it the duty of the legislature to provide for "a general system of education, ascending in a regular graduation from township schools to a State university, wherein tuition shall be gratis, and equally open to all."⁴

Literature did not flourish in the West, although the newspaper press⁵ followed closely after the retreating savage and many short-lived periodicals were founded.⁶ Lexington, Kentucky, and Cincinnati made rival claims to be the "Athens of the West". In religion, the West was partial to those denominations which prevailed in the democratic portions of New England. Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians took the lead.⁷ The religious life of the West

¹ McMaster, *History of the People of the United States*, V. 370-372.

² For example, Amos Kendall was tutor in Henry Clay's family. See Kendall, *Autobiography*.

³ November, 1830, III. 127, 131.

⁴ Poore, *Charters and Constitutions*, part I. 508 (art. ix., sec. 2 of Constitution of Indiana, 1816).

⁵ W. H. Perrin, *Pioneer Press of Kentucky* (Filson Club Publications).

⁶ Venable, *Beginnings of Literary Culture in the Ohio Valley*, ch. III.; W. B. Cairns, "Development of American Literature from 1815 to 1833", in *Bulletin of University of Wisconsin, Philology and Literature Series*, I. 60-63.

⁷ *American Quarterly Register*, III. 135, November, 1830, gives an estimate of the number of churches and communicants of the various sects in the Mississippi valley; see also, Schermerhorn and Mills, *Correct View of that Part of the United States West of the Allegany Mountains* (Hartford, 1814); *Home Missionary*, 1827, pp. 78, 79, 1830, p. 172; McMaster, *History of the People of the United States*, IV. 550-555.

frequently expressed itself in the form of emotional gatherings, in the camp-meetings and the revivals, where the rude, unlettered, but deeply religious backwoods preachers moved their large audiences with warnings of the wrath of God. Muscular Christianity was personified in the circuit-rider, who, with his saddle-bags and Bible, threaded the dreary trails through the forest from settlement to settlement. From the responsiveness of the West to religious excitement, it was easy to perceive that here was a region capable of being swayed in large masses by enthusiasm. These traits of the camp-meeting were manifested later in political campaigns.

Thus this society beyond the mountains, recruited from all the older states and bound together by the Mississippi, constituted a region swayed by common impulses. By the march of the Westerners away from their native states to the public domain of the nation, and by their organization as territories of the United States, they lost that state particularism which distinguished many of the old commonwealths of the coast. The section was nationalistic and democratic to the core. The West admired the self-made man and was ready to follow its hero with the enthusiasm of a section more responsive to personality than to the programmes of trained statesmen. It was a self-confident section, believing in its right to share in government, and troubled by no doubts of its capacity to rule.

FREDERICK J. TURNER.